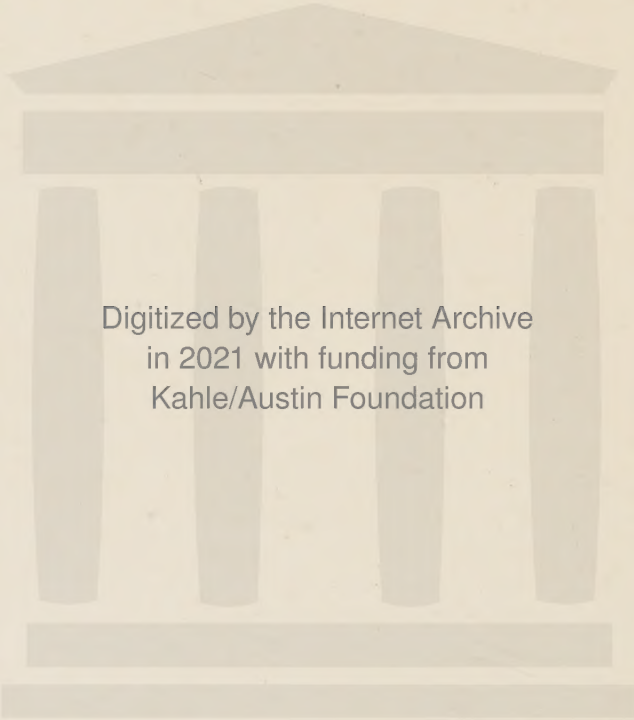


AMERICA  
AND OTHER  
POEMS





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A M E R I C A  
AND OTHER POEMS



# AMERICA

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

W. J. DAWSON

AUTHOR OF "THE VISION OF SOULS," ETC.

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TO  
CONINGSBY DAWSON

THE FATHER TO THE SON

*We each have found the lost Hesperides,  
And homeward brought bright fruitage;  
thine  
Touched with the magic bloom of morning  
seas,  
With the cool light of evening—mine.*



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A M E R I C A  
AND OTHER POEMS



## AMERICA

### I

WHERE the many-windowed towers dare the  
sky

And the wizard bridges span the busy sea,  
Where the many-mated shuttles of the ships  
Weave the Past into the web of Things to Be;

Where the high-suspended cars

Braid the night with ropes of stars,

And the earth is grooved with arteries of fire;

There the City breathes its passion and desire,

And I see it stand supreme,

Fantastic as a dream.

Will it falter? Will it fail? Will it endure?

Nay: it standeth very sure.

## II

Thousand-domed the cities line the water-  
ways,

Thousand-leagued the coast-wise sands and  
forests spread,

And city calls to city through the dawns,

“Behold the wastes we have inherited!

In the ancient dwelling-place

Of a long-forgotten race,

We deck ourselves with marble and with gold,

We plant our feet of steel, our flag of stars  
unfold,

And uplift our strident song

Of Triumph to the Strong!”

Will they falter? Will they fail? Will they  
endure?

Nay: all standeth very sure.



## III

Where the lonely huntsman fronts the north-  
ern lights,

Where the mountains hang like clouds against  
the sky,

Where the yellow flame of wheatfields, mile  
on mile,

Quivers as the steel-linked cars go rushing by:

Where the palm-fringed smooth lagoon

Sucks down the Southern moon,

Where the white-walled houses flash like sails  
at sea

Upon the gray-green prairie's vacancy,

Still I hear the song

Of Triumph to the Strong.

Will it falter? Will it cease? Will it endure?

Nay: its note is very sure.

## IV

From the Volga and the Tiber and the Seas,  
From the lands of long misrule thy children  
come,

And thou standest like a Shepherd by the fold  
And numberest thy sheep as they draw home.

From the ways of dearth and toil,

From the hard penurious soil,

Like school-freed children glad they seek thy  
knees,

And find wise liberty in thy decrees.

No more disconsolate,

They grasp a larger fate;

Shall they falter? Shall they find thy free-  
dom sure?

Yea: in truth they shall endure.

## V

From the sunset-lands they come, and from  
the East,

From the Tagus, and the Danube, and the  
Rhine,

From the waters ploughed by Norsemen in  
their pride,

From the fiord and the factory, and the mine:  
Behold a miracle!

Within thy crucible

The cosmic flame that challenges the sun

Transfuses million-varied lives to one!

O nation, young and gay,

Nation born within a day,

Shall it falter! Shall it cease? Shall it en-  
dure?

Yea: it standeth very sure.

## VI

Where the workshop flings its plumes athwart  
the sky,

Where the labouring engines groan as if in  
pain,

Where the low tree-cradled cottage dots the  
hill,

Where the lonely ranchman rides along the  
plain;

Where the Mississippi flows,

Where Shasta lifts her snows,

Day by day thy far-flung children praise thy  
name,

Forgetful they of days of ancient shame,

Of Emperors and Czars,

Beneath thy flag of stars.

Shall they falter? Shall they cease? Shall  
they endure?

Yea: their faith is very sure.

## VII

For a bitter night and day they shall be tried,  
They shall moan within the cruel hand of  
greed;

But ever when the wrong has wrought its  
worst

Shall arise Redeemers answering to their  
need.

From some backwood Bethlehem

Their Christ shall come to them;

Thro' the roaring hells of Mammon, by the  
path

Of mocking Calvaries, he shall pass on in his  
    wrath,  
Till his hands have hewn the way  
To the daylight and the Day.  
Shall he falter in the strife? Shall he en-  
    dure?  
Nay: his step is very sure.

## VIII

Where the school-house banner flaunts the  
    morning breeze,  
Where the rough farm student strides amid  
    the wheat,  
Where the voice of knowledge fills a thousand  
    halls,  
Where the athletes in their mimic warfare  
    meet;

Where the master grasps the brand  
Of lightning in his hand,  
And the hidden Powers of Air to service bent  
Proclaim the issue of the long experiment,  
I behold the future race  
Arise in strength and grace;  
Shall they falter? Shall they fail? Shall they  
endure?  
Lo, the onward march is sure.

## IX

With the tempered pride of chastened confidence,  
Level-browed and eager-eyed the race shall be,  
And their lips shall learn the frugal speech of  
power,  
And the braggart boast shall perish utterly.

False gods of gold and lust  
Shall crumble into dust;  
Till, last of all, the nation's King shall come,  
And on each high-piled capitol and dome,  
Wherein Right hath suffered loss,  
Not the Eagle, but the Cross  
Shall greet obedient peoples and endure—  
Yea: this end is very sure.



## EXTREME UNCTION

(AVIGNON)

### PART I

So ends the long confession; so

Begins the last most mystic rite.

God's lily of Dawn begins to grow

Out of the stagnant pools of Night.

The poplars shiver underneath

The pallid stars; the hooded hills

Stand still, like monks, and hold their breath

To see the travail God fulfils.

Would any think to see her thus,

Her face made bright with God's live flame,

She hid so many sins from us,

Or trod such secret ways of shame?

She lies, palm folded meek on palm,

She smiles as they who visions see;

No dying saint drank deeper calm,

Nor God's own Mother verily.

So have I seen a flower shoot

Up golden-hearted, angel-wise,

Nor shall one guess what at the root

Of hidden putrefaction lies:

Nor shall one ask, nor shall one know

Thro' what dim depths its fibres range;

Brother, God willed it even so,

And God's world—it is very strange!

First with God's holy oil I touch

The eyelids dropped above the eyes

Which loved the world's pomps overmuch,

Whose vision night and day likewise

Was wholly of love's hid delight,

Nor knew the wonder of God's grace;

May peace fall on them, nor affright

Be theirs when they behold God's face.

Within them may each picture fade

Of old delights, despairs, desires,

As fade the faces fancy made

In childhood's long-extinguished fires.

My daughter, lift thine eyes and see

The Holy Rood, the Thorn-crowned Man,

—Forgotten long,—Who died for thee,

And loved thee since the world began.

Likewise I shrive each gate of sense,  
Each delicate nostril, tender ear;  
Gone are thy lovers, gone, Ah whence,  
Sighs flower-sweet, vows heaven-dear?  
Gone is thy dream, and unfulfilled!  
Gone those for whom thy soul did wait!  
O sense that sinned, O sense that thrilled,  
Behold thy house left desolate!

Is it not written, even thus  
Daughters of music they shall cease?  
Watchers at windows, who for us  
Made signs of trouble or of peace,  
These, when is broke the golden bowl  
Shall vanish in the evening gleam;  
O dream of Life, O Living Soul,  
Thyself a Dream within a Dream!

Next on thy lips my sign I make,  
Full crimson lips they always were  
That smiled a little when they spake,  
(Dear God, how sweet the face of her!)  
Porches of laughter, doors of pain  
Wherefrom Love turns in fear and flies,  
Crying, "The clouds pursue the rain,  
What pleasure have I now in these?"

Doors that are shut forevermore,  
For mourners go about the street;  
Red lips that blossomed kisses bore  
In far-off days when Love was sweet;  
Red flowers that fall at last to dust,  
Trodden beneath the feet of men,  
Lo, He is near, Who blessed the trust  
And took the kiss of Magdalen!

Open thy hands, I touch these too

Which took so fast a hold on sin,

All soft-felt touches loved, and knew

How the blood leapt and burned therein;

Frail hands that pluck the counterpane,

That idly flutter to and fro,

Lo, Christ stoops low—ye may attain

To touch His garment ere He go!

Next on each foot so swift to run

In ways where heavy odours weighed

Upon the soul, and God's own sun

Pierced faintly thro' the poisonous shade;

He, whose tired feet were washed with tears,

Now washes thine with oils of grace,

That thine may climb beyond the spheres

And find the path that finds His face.

And last upon thy heart, which is

As a tense string, on which Death makes  
Such music of wild woe and bliss

It vibrates, and vibrating breaks!  
Upon thy heart, which knew desire,  
Its little gain, its bitter loss,  
Its cruel insatiable fire,

I lay for sign of peace His Cross.

So all is done. My daughter, now

Look up and see thy place prepared.  
See how the streets of heaven glow,  
The fruit of Life with angels shared!  
Apostles, martyrs, saints of grace,  
Each bends toward you a shining head;  
Be of good cheer!—Ah, Christ! her face  
Grows gray, her hands fall—she is dead!

## PART II

The cold rain falls upon her grave,  
The dark night creeps along the eave,  
Outside she lies where grasses wave  
And boughs make moan, and tired winds  
grieve.

Outside beneath the river-mist,  
In that grim bed of doleful rest,  
The mouth of rose I never kiss't,  
The slender hands I never press't.

Peace, peace, O heart that loved her too,  
O heart that broke discerning how  
Too near, too far, too dear she grew  
Long years ago—O wake not thou!  
Peace, peace, O heart! Is it not writ  
That not a sparrow falls, but He  
Who gave it wings remembers it?  
Pity of God, remember me!



The things that were, the things that are

I weigh and ponder, knowing well

My sin than hers was greater far

For love in me was mutable.

God pardon me this sweet excess

Of late-wise folly that I feel

Sin cannot make me love her less,

Nor virtue bid me lowlier kneel.

I love, but not the love that used

Within this heart of flesh to beat

Can stir me now; the cord is loosed,

Sunk is the fire and spent the heat.

And thou art as the angels, they

Who marry not—Christ sayeth so—

O dear dead woman teach me the way

Of this new love that dead folks know!

Draw near, when day begins to chase  
Night weeping from the darkened eave;  
Draw near, thou vision of a Face,  
With eyes that smile and cannot grieve.  
Draw near, in faint-spun amethyst  
Of Dawn, half-hidden, half-confess't,  
O mouth of rose I never kiss't,  
O slender hands I never press't!

The half-light grows upon the hill,  
Beneath the hill the waters glide;  
The air is very sweet and still,  
And all the Doors of God stand wide.  
Steal forth and meet me, if you may;  
Stoop low, O mouth of rose, stoop low;  
O dear, dead Woman, teach me the way  
Of this new love that dead folk know.

## THE KISS

(1794)

THE place is Paris; the scene, the time,  
When the Terror spawned her bloody brood.  
On a certain morning, gray with rime,  
A woman before her judges stood;  
Proud and straight, with golden hair  
Like a crown of glory, she stood there.  
Friend was she of a martyred queen;  
Robespierre glared on her and said,  
"Here's dainty food for the guillotine,  
Gold looks best when it's mixed with red.  
Gold-red blood, and blood-gold hair,  
God, but He made this woman fair!

“A shade too pale in the lip maybe,  
And the scornful mouth of the aristocrat!  
God’s work’s good, but you shall see  
Robespierre can improve on that!  
Wait till you watch *my* flesh-tints grow—  
Roses of blood on cheek and brow!”

But just as the tumbril at the door  
Rattled and stopt, out flasht a sword;  
A man’s voice clamoured above the roar  
Of Robespierre’s court, and craved a word;  
And Robespierre, scenting some novel freak  
In the daily drama, bade him speak.

The court grew still as a windless sea;  
With voice a-tremble the man commenced;

“Citizen-friends, you all know me,

Wounds I have borne unrecompensed,  
Something have suffered in my task,  
Nothing have asked, but now I ask.

“A soldier-citizen, here stand I

Claiming this woman's life—be just!  
This my price for a pain gone by,  
Wound of bullet and bayonet-thrust;  
Also, to make the pact complete,  
My life for hers—'tis right and meet.

“‘Love,’ you will say, ‘France knows it not,

Duty, not love, for hours like this!’  
’Tis well, for she loves me not a jot,  
Owes me no love, hath given no kiss;

These many years I love, but she  
Knows not love, and loves not me.

“Sirs, this woman has been to me  
France herself incarnated!  
Citizens, look, and you shall see  
France herself in that golden head,  
France in that curling lip, and France  
In the fire and charm of that proud glance.

“Loved in triumph, adored in shame,  
Poet, prophetess, priestess Thou,  
Guarding the deathless altar-flame,  
Wearing the thorn-crown on thy brow,  
Mocking the mockers who made thy pain,  
Dying, ever to rise again:

“France, with the deep dream-weighted eyes,  
France, with the calm brows fronting fate,  
Beautiful, passionate, foolish, wise,  
Here thou standest incarnate,  
Thou and this woman one,—and I  
Dying for her who must not die!”

The man’s voice ceased, and a hum went round  
The crowded court. Then Robespierre  
Lifted his cruel eyes from the ground  
And glanced round furtively, half-aware  
And half-resolved how the tide would flow;  
Then took it, and said, “She’s free—may go!”

Until that moment the woman had stood  
Immobile, scornful, marble-cold.

Now, with a hot, quick rush of blood

Life came back and the current rolled  
Delicious thro' every vein; she seemed  
The rose-red goddess poets have dreamed.

Glowed and melted her countenance,

Her eyes fulfilled with happy tears;  
Slowly she spake, as in a trance,

"He saith he hath loved me many years,  
No kiss he hath ever won, he saith,  
Yet he hath loved me unto death!"

Sideways she bent, moved forth a pace,

Then, sudden she cross't the clamorous room,  
Her eyes leapt out in one long embrace

On his, and brought him love and doom,



She stooped her glorious golden head  
And kissed the man—and he fell dead.

Which would you choose if you might choose,  
The fate of woman or the man?  
Give me the man's life, tho' it lose  
Joy in the moment it began;  
Give me the death that is quick and sweet  
In the hour when life appears complete.

For him, and for me too, I will trust,  
No watching the light fade gleam by gleam;  
No time for the fair to fall in dust,  
For evil to cloud and spoil the dream:  
And never to know that pain of pain  
To have wearied of dreams and found them  
vain.

I envy the man, for in that hour he

Knew his impossible hope was true.

He lost the world for a kiss, but she

Lost him; and, as each fades out of view,

I see him wrapt in a blaze of bliss,

She—kissing dead lips that cannot kiss.

## THE DREAM OF KINGS

DEAD Kings in the dust are hid  
Pharaoh in his Pyramid,  
Caesar sleeps no man knows where,  
Alexander's tomb is bare,  
Bonaparte lies robed in lead,  
All the foes he fought are dead,  
Of their conquests all they keep  
Is a place wherein to sleep.

Gone the purple insolence  
Of their brief omnipotence;  
Gone the legions that they hurled  
Half across a flaming world;

All the trumpets shouting war  
Penetrate not where they are ;  
Glory's torch that led them on,  
Pride that mocked oblivion,  
All are darkened, all are gone.

Humbler now the dreams they have,  
Each within his mighty grave ;  
Caesar, wheresoe'er he lies  
Dreams of Cleopatra's eyes ;  
Alexander craves the grace  
Of Roxana's tender face ;  
Bonaparte with passion keen  
Turns again to Josephine ;  
Each toward the other yearns,  
Glory gone, lo, Love returns.

Dead Kings in the dust are hid,  
Yet within the Pyramid,  
Monument of Glory's lust,  
Hands of dust seek hands of dust;  
Quite forgotten crown and state;  
Pomp of power, fear of fate;  
Still remains one subtler bliss,  
Sweetness of some woman's kiss,  
All that life has left them—this!

## FROM THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE

O, WHEN will ye let us go?

We have toiled and are not fed,

Scant our wages, sour our bread;

Parched and smitten of the sun

Ours is labour never done.

Bricks we fashion without straw,

Blows we suffer without law,

We are minished and brought low,

*O when will ye let us go?*

Ah, how sad the years and slow!

What is this that ye have said,

“Depart ye when your debt is paid?”

Wherewithal have we to pay?

Ye have taken the light of day,

Taken hope, and strength, and life,

Taken children, home and wife;

Is there any further woe?

*O when will ye let us go?*

Up, and down, and to and fro

We see long processions move;

Maidens garlanded with love,

Youths who know the joy of youth,

Priests who talk of right and truth!

Not for us the lover's bliss,

Lips that whisper, mouths that kiss,

Nor the mind that seeks to know—

*O when will ye let us go?*

Once, but very long ago,  
So we heard our fathers say,  
They rose up at dawn of day,  
Saw the sun, a shining disc,  
Gild the feathered tamarisk,  
Rode forth free and sang their psalm  
By the river-rooted palm;  
No such joy their children know—  
*O when will ye let us go?*

Song is for the free, we trow,  
Worship for the heart at ease,  
Prayer for those who dwell in peace,  
God for those who have not trod  
Thro' the Hell that knows not God!  
We, in strange lands wandering,  
Songs of Zion cannot sing,



. This the only song we know—

*O when will ye let us go?*

Near the waters, where they flow,

We have seen the refuse-heap,

Refuse no man cares to keep!

Chard and fragment, there they lie

Quiet in their infamy!

Chard and fragment, such are we,

Quiet all we yearn to be;

Cast us forth, and even so

*Let us go, O let us go!*

Now there falls the evening glow,

Now the solemn temple's built,

Porch of stone and roof of gilt.

Enter in, O eager throng,

Flame-faced priest and child of song!

As for us, we have not sought  
Entrance to the house we wrought;  
Humbler coveting we know—  
*Only this, O let us go!*

Now there dies the mason's blow,  
Lingering on the sunset air;  
Now is built, proportioned fair,  
All the marriage-house we raised.  
Lo, we ask not to be praised;  
Enter ye, and fragrant lie  
On your beds of ivory;  
We, too dulled by work and woe,  
*Only cry, O let us go!*

Now there passes, moving slow,  
Torch-lit to the Pyramid,  
He from whom all things are hid.

Lo, the corpse by love home-lit,  
We behold and envy it!  
Lo, the dead, the Thing he is,  
We would fain be even this!  
Mighty death, thou art no foe,  
*Thou last Friend, O let us go!*

God hath brought us very low,  
Minished and brought low are we,  
Things of naught and shame we be!  
Bricks we fashion without straw,  
Blows we suffer without law;  
Hear us, God, whom none will heed,  
Out of Hell we fruitless plead;  
Thou, Who knowest things are so,  
*Strike Thine hour, and let us go.*

## PEACE

PEACE?

Not till the wrath of the sea is ended and past;

And folded the wings of the thunder that  
troubled the world!

Not till the final bolt of the Lightning is  
flash't

Shall the winds be at rest, and the banners  
of Tempest be furled!

Then when the havoc is done,

Shall rise the innocent Sun,

And the Sea and the Dead shall have peace!

Peace?

Not till the corn is laid low and the land is  
afame

And the red wine of War is drunk to its  
bitterest drop;  
Not till the bruised breasts of Freedom are  
healed of their shame,  
Not till the city is void shall the Plague-  
Angel stop!  
Then, when the Martyrdom's done,  
Shall rise the ignorant Sun,  
And the Land and the Dead shall have peace!

Peace?  
Not while the arrow that flies at noonday is  
feared,  
Not while the pestilence poisons and darkens  
the night;  
Not while the innocent flesh with anguish is  
seared,

Not while at eventide weary ones cry for  
the light!

Then, when the Torture is done,

Shall rise the insolent Sun,

And the Dead and the Living have peace!

THE LAST RIDE OF THE SHEIK  
ABDULLAH

INTO the desert, into the desert

All alone I ride!

At last the clamour of tongues is still,

The fever of living, the strife of will,

The doors of the old sick life flung wide

Let me out, and thus I ride.

The City smokes like a fire of leaves

Fallen and burned its laurelled pride;

Grief runs moaning under its eaves;

But over my head God's whiteness glides,

Under my feet the wide world slides,

It is earth that runs back like a tide,

And heaven comes rushing up as I ride,  
As into the desert I ride.

Still, as never was city or sea,  
Empty of man or house or tree,  
The desert lies round me as I ride;  
The blue sky shuts down everywhere  
Close on the earth, the quivering air  
Parts like a flame that winds divide,  
And closes behind me as I ride.

Ah, Joy of Freedom! Let me ride  
Far from the world I have denied,  
Forever and ever on, still on,  
Till all the stars that flickered and shone  
Have fallen behind me, one by one,  
Till I touch the blue steep wall of air,  
And suddenly draw rein at God's stair,



Coming on Heaven unaware,  
As over the desert I ride.

Caged and tamed for many a day,  
In the world's market hot and gray,  
I have danced, a puppet, to pipes that play  
A mirthful tune that mirth belied;  
A wilder music now salutes  
My soul, and runs around life's roots,  
Like silver rain that melts the sod.  
Hark! how the sands around me hum,  
And all the stretched sky, like a drum,  
Throbs at the finger-touch of God,  
As into the desert I ride.

I will ride right on to God's feet,  
For my heart is strong, my camel fleet;

I will ride on and never stop  
Till at His palace stair I drop,  
When Azrael standeth wonder-eyed,  
In one last venture quenching thirst  
For freedom lost in the years accurst  
Which barren as sand behind me lie;  
On to the rim of the utmost sky  
I ride as I die, I die and ride!

The earth slides under me like a tide,  
My life runs out of me as I ride,  
I ride right into Eternity;  
Azrael stoops to let me by,  
Like a torn curtain hangs the sky,  
Heaven upon its other side!  
And so I ride,  
I die as I ride, I ride and die.

## SALOME

(*Singing*)

*Grasp the world, O hands of mine,  
Little hands that hold the world—  
Press it, till it flows in wine,  
Fling it from thee, like the curled  
Grape-skin, when its use is done—  
See the magic goblet shine,  
Red with blood and bright with sun—  
So I drink—the draught is mine!*

(*Speaking*)

Not that I care so much, but who could tell  
The issue, like a hungry lightning glare

Flasht from clear heavens? I never danced  
so well,

That said he, said they all. I feel my hair  
Stir still with magic motions, perfumed  
wind

Lashed into eddies, beating on the bare  
Smooth limbs and breast; and then I throw  
behind,

Over my shoulder, so, a sudden glance,  
And catch their faces smitten by its light  
Into a hungrier circle. Then I smile,  
And suddenly all the spirit of the dance  
Consumes me, rends me, blots and blurs my  
sight

With a fiery wind, their great eyes all the  
while

Burning yet closer, eating into my heart.

Who cares what comes? There's nothing  
good nor vile.

The world whirls round, I'm lifted like a  
part

Of a giant whole; a spirit's in my feet,  
He rends my raiment, shakes my black hair  
down,

Smites my lips into song, so shrill and sweet  
It frightens me. Ah, that's my own, my  
own!

Limbs, hair, song, face, I know to-night  
to be

Most beautiful. Look, my lords, there's a  
foot

Worthy a throne at least! What's the  
decree?

Half of his kingdom Herod gives to me?

I cannot tell; but all the great lamps  
shoot

An angry light, and suddenly, like a tide,  
The fire runs out of my heart, and still I  
stand

As though I had never moved; and there's  
a hand

Laid on me, and Herodias, crafty-eyed,  
Is buzzing at my ear.

(*Singing*)

*Good and ill, mere colors these,  
Take of each as thou shalt please,  
Purple grape or yellow—thine;  
Each alike shall make life's wine,  
See the magic goblet shine,  
Drink thy fill, and take thy ease.*

(*Speaking*)

What's man after all? Is flesh so dear  
That I should tremble? Yes, we feed on  
men,

You and I, mother; that's a woman's part—  
Glare on them, kiss them, draw them near,  
and then

Leave their bones to the vulture. That's  
the art

You've taught me, and I have not learned  
amiss:

I'll snare a Caesar some day—there's a prey  
Worthy the aim. I ever took as bliss  
The sight of death. Heart of me! many a  
day

How I have clapped my hands to see the  
play,

When the stripped gladiators hewed and  
hacked

And made the sand red. Once a man I saw  
Just at my feet, torn by the lion's paw,  
His shoulder bare to the bone, beseeching me  
In a hoarse voice that was so shrill and  
cracked

I laughed outright. 'Twas god-like sport  
to see

The great beast leap, his angry mane like fire  
Flashing about his ears, the downward  
stroke

Of the great foot striking into the mire  
The man like a mouse, with his back torn  
and broke;

And I—I called for more—more lions,  
more men:



That tawny beast who glares in yonder den,  
Pit him against a score, the supplest score  
Of slaves who ever trembled! Ah, the long  
day,

Would it had lasted longer! Evermore  
The same big pulse sending delicious thrills  
Through the swoll'n veins, when the eye  
caught the ray

Of the sharp sword, and heard the lion  
roar

Over his prey, like thunder in the hills.  
And Herod, you remember, all the day  
Sleepily watched, quick'ning a little bit  
When the men died, till through the nar-  
row slit

Of his heavy lids you saw there burned a  
flame

Eager as mine, whose passion went and  
came

Like a strong madness, till I longed to hurl  
You, and your Herod, and all the people  
down

Into the sand, and watch the bloody whirl—  
I, on the topmost turret's slippery stone,  
Standing triumphant in the wind, alone,  
Watching you fight and die. There, do not  
frown,

That's but a fancy. What was it you  
said?

This man, this John the Baptist: well, I  
own

I care not if he be alive or dead;  
Let him rot slowly, or be slain, or choke;  
But why should *I* strike the stroke?

I saw him once : dark like a thunder-rack

He lowered in the outer court, his eyes, jet

black,

Burned with a flame no other eyes e'er had ;

His voice like a trumpet, angry, somewhat

sad,

Calling, *Repent* : I wonder what he meant ?

There he stood garbed in skins, his shoul-

ders bent,

Black hair like mine, but grizzled and un-

kempt,

Looking around with something like con-

tempt

Or pity, with a fixed, clear, eager gaze,

As one who saw right through the sunlight's

blaze

Into the place beyond, where there are  
hatched

The viper-lightnings: so he stood and  
watched.

He moved me for a moment, made me  
feel

A strange deep thrill, I never could think  
why,

But you—you hate him with a hate so  
real,

I would not wonder if that same deep eye  
Spied something now: or if those same  
thin lips

Loosed on you their sharp hail. I've heard  
it said

If you say "*John*" to Herod, he bows his  
head,

And his puffed face grows dark, as though  
eclipse

Breathed in the presence of a hated name.

Well, let him die: I never liked to see  
Men whose eyes smote you with that kind  
of flame:

But why insist he die so secretly?  
Now I would bring him in, call Tertius,  
Make them both fight—there, in that marble  
space;

Think of what jest the two would make  
for us!

Only I must confess that solemn face  
Might spoil the banquet with its angry eyes;  
So why not save him for the lions? 'Twere  
wise

To keep a man like that ; be sure he'd fight  
Beyond the best. 'Tis hardly worth the light  
To kill him secretly ; we shall not see  
Whether he quail or frown. But let it be.  
We want no thunder-clouds round Herod's  
board ;  
Let them go quickly, bring the head ab-  
horred,  
And since you dare not bear it—*why, let me !*

(*Singing*)

*Life and death meet in one cup,  
Good and evil make the wine ;  
See the magic goblet shine,  
Take the draught, and drink it up.*

## BLAKE'S HOMECOMING

*There was sorrow on the sea,*

*All the way, all the way!*

*Home we came with fame, but he*

*Dying, dying all the way.*

At Santa Cruz the squadron lay,

At dawn the whisper flew

"God be thanked we sail today!"

Voices sang and trumpets blew,

All the fleet was like a fair,

"Pulley haul, and heave, yo ho!"

Ready here and steady there,

Let her go,

Head her northward thro' the bay!"

"Send the wind, O God be kind!"

Volleying from the south it came,

With the thunder packed behind,

So we sailed with seas aflame.

Fire-led, like the Israelite,

Cloud-defended, so we sailed;

Trumpets blowing day and night

Shrilled and hailed,

And God rode upon the wind.

"Waken," hear the seaman cry,

"Waken, Captain, England's near!"



Grayer grew the sea and sky,

Nor'west all the land rose clear.

Dim-eyed, worn with wounds and care,

On the heaving deck sat Blake,

"Tell me where is England, where?"

So he spake,

"Let me see her ere I die!"

Now the Lizard's past, and lo

All the Cornish hills rise red

In the Autumn's after-glow.

"Heaven," was the one word he said.

"England and not Heaven," we cried.

"'Tis the same," he made reply.

Bonfires blazed out far and wide,

Lit the sky

All the way to Plymouth Hoe!

Fair the wind and swift the tide;

Ah, the English air is sweet!

People shouted, trumpets cried;

Then he rose upon his feet,

Strove to see, but he was blind,

Strove to walk, but force was spent,

Felt upon his face the wind,

Smiled content,

Tasting English air—and died!

Hush the trumpets! Cease the din!

Shores of England, be ye dumb!

He is gone, some port to win

Where your praises cannot come.

On the other side for him

Blow God's trumpets, clear and far,

See his soul pass, fading dim

Like a star!

Shores be still! He enters in.

*There was glory on the sea,*

*All the way, all the way!*

*Home we came with fame, but he*

*Dying, dying all the way.*

## CADIZ BAY

You remember Cadiz Bay?  
There the water shoals away,  
Spouts and tumbles, green as grass,  
Greener water never was.  
Red and yellow spreads the land,  
Pink and yellow spreads the sand;  
Like a bubble on the swell  
Rides the glittering citadel,  
And beyond it, flower-bright,  
Piled up windows take the light.  
Sailing through the gates of day,  
Thus I saw fair Cadiz town

With the blue hills looking down,  
Cadiz town by Cadiz Bay.

Raleigh sailed into this Bay  
Long since when the dawn was gray;  
Fought till eve the Spanish dons,  
Broke their high-built galleons,  
“Now,” quoth he, “I think I hear  
Old Sir Richard calling clear,  
‘Here die I, at set of sun,  
Joyous, for my duty’s done!’  
Over Cadiz, like a flame,  
Burns Sir Richard’s glorious name;  
On the poop of Heaven he stands,  
See him—lifting crimson hands!  
Hear him—‘Thus I led the way;  
Who for England dies today?’  
Thus spake he in Cadiz Bay.”

Two long centuries pass away;  
Sailing into Cadiz Bay  
Comes another admiral,  
Bravest he, where brave were all.  
“Duty—let the word flame far,  
“Starriest word, be thou our star!  
“Burn aloft amid the gloom,  
“Light us to the hero’s tomb;  
“This day every man shall do  
“His duty!” So, on that great day  
The exultant signal flew  
All the length of Cadiz Bay.

O my England, old and gray,  
You’ll remember Cadiz Bay?  
Here the voice of England spake,  
Here came Raleigh, Nelson, Blake,

Spake triumphant, glorious came,  
With shouting crews and ships aflame,  
Riding down the water-way,  
Proud as on a marriage day!  
You'll remember that great youth  
When you fought for realm and truth;  
And we, O curs't be we, and let  
Our tongues be dumb if we forget!

Puissant still, by all defied,  
England, for whom Nelson died,  
Front thy fate! Arise and be  
What thou wert, nor fear to play  
Thy mighty part! The *Victory*  
With thy pennon flying free,  
Lords it still in Cadiz Bay!

## THE FIRST-BORN

THE bitterest and the gladdest hour it was!  
I stood at the stair's foot, and heard your cry  
Pierce thro' the house. Upon the slanting glass  
The setting sun made splendour, and I  
watched

Him sink with eyes that nothing saw. Again  
A moment's space the chamber-door unlatched  
Let out your moanings, and I bitterly  
Bowed down, and trembled at your voice of  
pain.

Eternity seemed crowded in that hour;  
All thought and passion, faculty and power,  
Was quickened and intense: the veil of gross  
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And faulty apprehension was withdrawn  
And left the naked heaven of infinite things  
Close to me, like a throbbing heart. More  
close

I felt thy spirit, and I cried, "What now  
If she be passing out on angel's wings?"  
Just then the sun sank to his other dawn,  
And, as his rim burned down in final glow,  
I heard a new voice in the house, the cry  
Of the new-born, whose kindling human light  
Rose on our lives, and, please God, by-and-by,  
Shall shine afar athwart the world's dim night,  
When you and I in our dark rest shall lie.

## DELIVERANCE

IN that sore hour around thy bed there stood  
A silent guard of shadows, each equipped  
With dart or arrow aimed against thy life;  
Thy breath came slowly all that awful night!  
Outside I heard the Wind and Earth at strife,  
And on the window's ledge incessant dripped  
The pitiless rain. At last I left thy room,  
And, passing out, upon the threshold's edge  
Whom should I meet but Death! A wan clear  
light  
Fell from his fathomless eyes; his brow was  
gloom,  
His rustling raiment seemed to sigh like sedge

When the salt marsh winds wail and beat  
thereon.

He paused, he turned; and while I stood and  
wept,

Behold a crimson signal waved and shone

On the door's lintel,—even such an one

As he obeyed in Egypt—and I knew

Death heard some higher summons and with-  
drew.

When I returned, like a tired child you slept.

AT A GRECIAN ALTAR

PALE brow, no crown adorning,  
Dim eyes that cannot see,  
Face lifted up for scorning,  
What empire calls for Thee?  
What token dost Thou show me,  
By what sign may I know Thee,  
What homage do I owe Thee,  
That Thou persuadest me?

Where wasting water floweth  
To the unwasting sea,  
When Aphrodite goeth  
Foam-garlanded and free,

Where Tritons sport at leisure,  
And all things move in measure  
To a sonorous pleasure,

O who shall turn to Thee?

Where shining towers of laurel  
Guard all the flower-fresh lea,  
And, pale with amorous quarrel,  
Or, flushed with ecstasy,  
Daphne flies from Apollo,  
By woodland height and hollow  
And racing Cupids follow,

What place is this for Thee?

Yet, when the laurel burneth,  
And grief comes suddenly,  
When joy no more returneth,  
Nor song to the gray sea;

When shadows come and thicken,  
And hope itself doth sicken,  
And hearts no longer quicken  
To flutes of Arcady:

When men flee as a shadow  
That fades and shall not be;  
When mist lies on the meadow  
And pain moans in the sea;  
When love grows tired of giving,  
And mortal wills of striving,  
And life itself of living,  
Then Thou persuadest me!

Yet fair was man and woman,  
By that Leucadian sea,  
Then gods themselves were human  
With cheerful gaiety;

Heedless of past or morrow,  
They knew not how to borrow  
From hours of sin long sorrow  
As Thou of Galilee.

Earth mixed itself with heaven,  
Man spake with deity,  
Nor felt thro' sombre even  
The weight of things to be;  
Day brought no hours of weeping,  
Nor toil, nor fruitless reaping,  
And night brought quiet sleeping  
Of fulfilled infancy.

And so man lived contented  
Dream-rich and vision-free,  
Had naught that he repented,  
Was naught he would not be;

Made gods of his own nature,  
Grew to his perfect stature,  
A half-divine glad creature  
Of sun and wood and sea;

Till, undesired, Thou camest  
Pale god of agony;  
With sudden words Thou flamest  
Upon the crimson sea,  
And on the dawn came wailing,  
And clouds of darkness sailing,  
And wrath, and bitter railing,  
And broken melody.

The woods that knew the waters  
Where Naiades moved free,  
The hills that knew the daughters  
Of Bacchanalian glee,



The dales and groves, dew-gleaming,  
That saw the gracious seeming  
Of fair Endymion's dreaming,  
Grew sad because of Thee!

With slow maimed feet Thou ledest  
Thy grief-worn company,  
With hollow voice Thou pleadest  
That man should follow Thee.  
What token dost Thou show me,  
By what sign may I know Thee,  
What homage do I owe Thee,  
That Thou persuadest me?

Yet when to me, not prayerless,  
The gods indifferent be;  
When love itself, grown careless,  
Proves its inconstancy;

I hear Thy step behind me,  
I would some god might find me,  
Aye, Lord, subdue and bind me,  
And love me utterly.

The vain gods pass; they care not  
For human misery.

They kill, they smite, they spare not,  
All cruel and cold they be.

Their brows are clothed with thunder,  
Their feet are shod thereunder  
With flame that burns asunder  
Clasped hands they do not see.

With grief they will not tarry,  
Nor do they care that we  
Such bitter burdens carry  
Thro' days that bitter be.

They mock with mirth our mourning,  
They smite us without warning.  
Their mouths are filled with scorning,  
Their hearts with enmity.

But Thou, more gently fashioned,  
Hast conquered agony;  
Thou stand'st serene, impassioned,  
Lord of calamity!

Thine eyes, all grief confessing,  
Are full of quiet blessing;  
Thy wounds, on my wounds pressing,  
Change pain to ecstasy.

When Joy flies as a shadow  
That fades and shall not be;  
When mist lies in the meadow  
And grief moans on the sea;

Then, by the peace Thou sharest,  
By that dim crown Thou wearest,  
By that red Cross Thou bearest,  
Thou call'st my soul to Thee.

For Grief shall outlast laughter,  
And pain hold bliss in fee;  
And what love follows after  
To where all dead men be?  
And who, and by what vision,  
Shall shield from death's decision,  
Or call from fields Elysian  
His lost Eurydice?

Yea, who, when sad eyes fall on  
Sad eyes that cannot see;  
When fruitless voices call on  
Closed ears, closed utterly;

When love is turned to sadness,  
And memory to madness,  
Shall give me back the gladness  
Whereof Time spoileth me?

Not Pan whose pipes are broken  
By that Ionian sea,  
Where Thamos heard words spoken  
Of gods in agony.  
Nor Zeus, who long hath slumbered,  
Nor Bacchus, vine-encumbered,  
Nor nymphs, nor fauns unnumbered  
Of laughing Arcady.

But Thou, all anguish proving  
Thereby hast victory!  
Thou conquer'st hate by loving,  
Thro' bondage art made free;

Fate's master thro' complying  
With Fate: Joy's lord thro' sighing;  
Death's vanquisher by dying,  
Lord, Thou persuadest me.

## A CHILD IN HEAVEN

I NEVER dreamed that God could need

A child so small as this;

I quite forgot, until God spoke

That this, my child, was His.

I said, "My child shall dwell with me,

From Life's dawn to Life's even,"

And God replied, "The child is Mine,

And he shall dwell in Heaven."

Death never heard such tiny hands

Grope on his massy doors;

God never saw such tiny feet

Move up His golden floors.

Scarce from his mother was he weaned,

Scarce felt her soft embraces,

When he must walk alone, unscreened,

Thro' these wide heavenly places.

This room's length was his continent,

His treasured bliss—his toy!

What did he know, what could he do

In that ethereal joy?

Crowns for the saint, palms for the pure,

For these be fitting blisses;

But what for him, whose gain secure

Was just—his mother's kisses?

Here is the cradle where he lay,

White as his innocence,

No hand hath touched it since the day

God stooped and took him hence.



And here the empty breast whereon

He drank of joys and sorrows,

And dreamed his dreams—Alas, my son!—

Of unfulfilled tomorrows.

“Mother of God”—Some hope I find

In that remembered word;

Thou, on whose breast the sweet Child lay

Who brought thy heart the sword,

Did'st thou not see my little son,

Did'st thou not smile to meet him,

With kisses on thy mouth did'st run

To welcome him and greet him?

It must be so; for saints the palm,

But what for those who wait,

Mere mothers who with wistful eyes

Watch at the crystal gate?

O, too austere for childish gaze

The throne of the Eternal,

A lonely child up Heaven's wide ways

Comes seeking the maternal!

Yet let me think; was there no grief

God tasted in that hour

When from His breast the Son went forth

On whom Death should have power?

Down thro' the void alone He trod,

While stars sang loud evangels:

But round the secret place of God

There stood the weeping angels.

There stood the angels, veiled and dumb,

And Heaven laid down its mirth,

Remembering One, so far away,

The Son of God on earth!

Father of the Beloved Son

To earthly exile given,

Help me to say, "Thy will be done,"

I have a child in Heaven.

## LONDON

I LOVE this London with a love half hate,  
Fall'n Angel thou, all scarred with starry  
fires!

Mistress and foe of souls disconsolate,  
Centre and grave of all man's mad desires,  
Heaven of the happy, and the sad man's Hell,  
Imperial harlot, mirthful in thy woe,  
Wise, tragic, foolish, imperturbable,  
O wherefore, wherefore should I love thee  
so?

Yet so it is, so it must ever be!

No quiet hills can win me to their peace;  
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I hear thy tumult in the strenuous sea,

Thy wind-blown lights outshine the Plei-  
ades!

Freed from my chain, for Bondage still I  
yearn,

I fly from thee, detest thee, and return.

## DEPARTURE

THERE'S a silence on the meadows, there's a  
kindness in the trees,

There's a smiling dew of tears upon the  
grass,

And the flowers lean their petals and brush  
against my knees,

And the myrtles stoop toward me as I pass.

For they know, ah, well they know

That today from them I go.

There's a beauty in the City that I never saw  
before,

And the old gray spires are built of sapphire  
flame,

And the dingy streets are changed, each one  
a jasper floor,

Like the city John saw, Jerusalem its  
name—

For it knows, ah, it doth know  
That today from it I go.

And the faces of the men and women in the  
street,

And the toilers and the ragged boys at play,  
Are kindly-eyed and fair, are serious and  
sweet,

Friendly-featured as I go away today;  
For they know, ah, yes they know  
That today from them I go.

I never thought to miss them, the old familiar  
ways,

Happy-hearted I was minded to depart.

But now the softened music of those separated  
days

Haunts my dreams at night, and fills my  
heart.

For I know, ah, now I know

What it costs me thus to go.



## EMMAUS

AT night across the fens we walked,—  
The large round moon hung low—  
And I grew silent as you talked,  
Until at last the brook's dull flow,  
The Spring wind moving to and fro,  
Spoke loudest as we walked.

I did not speak,—you wondered why—  
For you that night were gay,  
With jest and jibe that craved reply,  
Your wit made scornful mock and play  
Of creeds your life had cast away,  
And I was silent—why?

I tell you now: against the moon

A Tree rose black and tall,

Whereon I saw, as clear as noon,

A Man, who did for pity call;

Could I approach with spear and gall

That Cross against the moon?

I tell you now: One walked with me,

Who put His hands in mine,

And touched me very tenderly:

Be He all human or divine,

Or how the God and man combine

I know not—but He walked with me.

I tell you now: One stooped to me,

And drew my lips to His;

He led me out to Galilee,  
And bade my heart not faithless be,  
And gave me the disciple's kiss,  
You mocked Him—but He stooped to me.

At night across the fens we walked,  
The large round moon hung low—  
All silently to me He talked,  
Until I heard the quiet flow  
Of water He hushed long ago,  
When on the waves He walked.

## IN NO MAN'S LAND

*Behold me, brother, about to die!*  
*Eton watched my mind expand,*  
*Oxford saw my hopes flame high,*  
*London broke my manhood's strength:*  
*Slow I sank, till here at length*  
*I found this innocent infamy*  
*Of board and bed in No Man's Land.*

Judge, brother, if I fear to die!  
I loved mankind, and none did hate;  
But in me thrived no faculty  
Of friendship; I have never known  
A soul that truly touched my own;

Lo, this was my infirmity,  
My torture also, and my fate.

Judge, brothers, if this world seem sweet!  
By many roads I sought to rise;  
Men thrust aside my halting feet,  
Until at last my strength was spent,  
And I, assured incompetent,  
Was driven like dust about the street,  
Beneath a city's scornful eyes.

Of all the things which I have done,  
If one were perfect of its kind  
Content were I to leave the sun:  
But nothing has been perfectly  
Wrought to the aim which tortured me;  
In common grooves my life has run,  
Nor ever answered to my mind.

Like one, who hears a haunting sound  
Of music, magically wrought,  
Which floats above him and around;  
Who follows breathless, but in vain  
O'er hill and moor—so I, with pain  
Have toiled thro' life's enchanted ground.  
Some seek and find: I only sought.

Some incommunicable heat  
Of high desire alone was mine;  
Some hidden stubborn pulse that beat  
Somewhere within the heart or brain,  
And stung me with its fruitless pain;  
The heart to race—but lame the feet,  
The will, but not the power to shine.

So, steadily down to No Man's Land  
I sank; put angry shame aside,  
Relinquished friendship's slack'ning hand,  
And made an end of hope and trust,  
Making no question things were just;  
Sometimes, too, saw the Happy stand  
Far-off, all rainbow-clad—and sighed!

But now all's over. On the stair  
Down which there slides the last lean rat,  
There waits a guest, benign and fair.  
Come in, O Death! The roof is low,  
But lower that to which we go,  
And if the room be cold and bare,  
Thou sure wilt not complain of that.

At least 'tis no unusual fate  
To drink the bitter cup and die.  
All generations, soon or late,  
Tread the same much-frequented road;  
Here Caesar stumbled with his load  
Of fame; here, wild and passionate,  
Pale Cleopatra, Antony!

Alike the anguish! He who first  
Did taste of Death might cry to God  
In terror, when upon him burst  
The void and darkness infinite;  
But now our eyes grow used to night;  
Nor can we wholly count accurst  
So known a fate, so thronged a road.



Fog-blurred, the dawn comes wearily,  
I hear far-off the scolding wheel  
Grind on the iron rails, I see  
The dim host in the dissonant street  
March out to toil with dragging feet;  
Brothers, do ye not envy me,  
That I no longer strive nor feel?

Poor fool of time advance, advance!  
Long since hast thou been done with hope,  
Long known thine insignificance;  
One lesson more—that this vast whole  
Ignores the individual soul;  
Ask not for any further chance,  
Nor wish a life of wider scope.

*Behold me, broken on Fortune's wheel!*  
*Eton saw my mind expand,*  
*Oxford did my soul unseal,*  
*London, imperturbable,*  
*Saw me burn in her lowest Hell.*  
*Released at last from woe and weal*  
*I sink in the dust of No man's Land!*

## THE RIVER OF REST

To lie in meadow grasses,  
Earth beneath my head,  
With silken winds to cover me  
Is a sufficient bed.

Blue darkness is my canopy,  
Dim trees my watchers are,  
And for a night-lamp at my couch  
God lights a special star.

To hear a river talking  
All the soft night through,  
Makes all my griefs orchestral  
And God seem near and true.

To hear beneath the grasses  
The dead with quiet breath  
Recount the roads they traversed,  
Makes me in love with Death.

For kings in ivory houses  
Beneath a golden dome  
The grave seems very terrible,  
To me—'tis coming home.

And when beneath these grasses  
I lie secure from change,  
If God should kiss me on the lips  
I should not think it strange.

## THE ENDING OF ALL DAYS

THIS is the doorway where we parted,  
This is the creaking garden gate;  
The roses climbed here, sanguine-hearted,  
The thrushes sang here soon and late.  
Here we stood on that last morning,  
Here in the sunlit garden ways,  
And the roses never gave me warning  
It was the ending of all days.

Here, where the jasmine hides the lattice,  
She gave a last sweet look to keep;  
That was her gracious way, and that is  
The white room where she fell asleep.

I spoke to her here of quick returning

When I had crowned myself with bays,  
And never a voice cried thro' my yearning,  
"This is the ending of all days."

If they had known,—the sanguine roses,

If I had known,—O fond blind eyes!  
But who hears the rosebud when it closes?

Who in Tomorrow's truth is wise?  
The roses would not speak to grieve her,  
The birds sang happiest roundelays,  
And I—thus lightly did I leave her,—  
It was the ending of all days.

This is the doorway where we parted,

This is the creaking garden gate,  
And a cold wind wanders broken-hearted  
Over the flowers, and cries "Too late."

This is the path by which they bore her,

Here, where the single sunbeam strays;

Was it with roses strewn before her?—

Unto the ending of all days.

## AT HER GRAVE

SIXTEEN at most was she  
Flower-fair, slender;  
Never were hands so slight,  
Never so tender.

I saw in sunset clouds  
Robes to beseem her;  
She, with a clearer eye,  
Saw her Redeemer.

One day she went from me;  
Then fell the Shadow,  
Mournful the sun appeared,  
Dreary the meadow.



Next day the sun came back,  
Dearer and clearer;  
Since then it seems to me  
God has drawn nearer.

## THE ITALIAN IN AMERICA

HE stood beside the curving track,  
And watched the thundering cars rush by;  
Then to his task he bent his back,  
And thought a little, bitterly,  
Of many things that he had not,  
And the strange ventures of his lot.

"I've bread enough to spare," he said,  
"Why should my heart be so forlorn?"  
Too well he knew. He bowed his head;  
"O for the house where I was born,  
The vineyards and the fields of maize,  
The olive trees that knew my ways:

“The song of women thro’ the vines,  
The jests with which they greeted us,  
The red moon netted in the pines,  
The bells that rang the Angelus,  
The low-breathed word, more sweet than  
prayer,  
Of her who waited for me there.

“O for the roads not built of steel,  
The skies that on my youth looked down,  
The far-off gold-crowned Campanile,  
The crumbling, many-gated town,  
The poplared pleasant Lombard plain  
Which I shall never see again.”

He stood beside the curving track  
And said these tender things; but I

Saw Time's vast curtain lifted back,  
And all the centuries rushing by;  
Along the track the legions came  
With brazen eagles wrought of flame.

For so they mourned—the sentinel  
Upon the tower beside the Tweed,  
Those armies imperturbable  
That served great Caesar at his need;  
And he, of Rome's imperial race,  
Looked at me with tired Caesar's face.

He stood beside the road he made,  
As they long since, whose flesh is grass,  
And saw, along the rock-hewn grade  
The Empire-bearing chariots pass;  
And Caesar's ghost, when night fell dim  
Approved his work, and smiled on him.

## SPRING TOKENS

How slow the Spring climbs up the world

To tired eyes, half-despairing!

Sweet April walks with shrouded face,

And Winter's garb is wearing.

Fair violets, from some summer place,

They're selling in the city:

But still the north wind blows, and blows;

It blows and has no pity.

The swallow long ago had come

If wishes could beguile it,

But still the swallow holds aloof,

He's wiser than the violet.

The cautious swallow loves us not,  
    He fears to venture near us,  
The violet only loves enough  
    To die that it may cheer us.

The north winds blow, but thro' the world  
    A pulsing movement quivers,  
As underneath dead ice one hears  
    The flow of living rivers.

And in the violet, gentle flower,  
    Strong summer's meek adorer,  
The whole wide woodlands' scent is stored,  
    June's fragrance blown before her;—

As when before my lady comes,  
    For whom my love is waiting,

A subtle essence fills the air

Her presence intimating.

By these sure signs I know today

Tho' all is bleak and frozen,

The Spring is near; she sends for pledge

The violet—her first cousin.

## THE WHISPERING WOOD

I FIND within the whispering wood

No sign of fairy, pard, or elf;

A holier mystery moves the blood,

I hear God talking to Himself.

Like breath that flows and ebbs, like sighs

Of wordless deep intense delight,

I hear the sacred monodies

God utters to Himself at night.

“O happy, happy things that move,

O happy birds that fly or nest,

Contented with a little love

And thankful for a little rest!



“What I have made is very good,

Good every tiniest thing that walks!”

Even so amid the whispering wood

Within Himself God broods and talks.

## THE PEOPLE'S CAUSE

O PEOPLE, will you never know your power,

Nor seize the earth, your just inheritance?

Lo, Babylon is fallen, dome and tower,

And broken Egypt's ancient dominance :

Tyre broodeth, widowed by her sailless sea,

O'er Nineveh the bittern spreads her wings ;

Prone, in the halls of famous revelry,

Dust lies upon the faces of dead Kings,

The paths lie open for your sure advance,

Long since the trumpet hath proclaimed the  
hour,

The hour foreseen, that ye shall wake from  
sleep

Upon a morning when the world shall burn,

And with a noise, like waters of the deep,  
Unto your Zion singing shall return.

O People, must the tale run on the same,  
Thro' all the generations, soon and late,  
The lamentations of a fruitless shame,  
The broken armies bowed to meet their fate?  
Is all in vain—the flaming barricade,  
The Cross, the gallows, the red guillotine,  
And all your marred redeemers, each one  
made

A sacrifice for thy new sloth and sin?  
When will ye come, no more disconsolate,  
With banners terrible, and feet of flame,  
Treading the wine-press of the grapes of  
wrath,  
In purple raiment, traveling in your might,

With Him Who long since trod the self-same  
path,  
And died in darkness that you might have  
light?

O People, shall these lesser Kings of clay  
Once more weld cruel chains about your  
feet?  
Shall lords of Mammon your great progress  
stay,  
Or counsel you with craft to vile retreat?  
Great Rome, with all her legions, slew you  
not,  
Proud Paris kissed for peace your brows  
blood-hued,  
· You were not crushed by Caesar's chariot;  
With Jesus crucified, in life renewed

You lived again. And shall you fear to greet

The flaming pennon of your ultimate day,  
Bought with a little gold to serve the lust

Of those who build an empire on your pain?  
Once more the Spirit stirs the bones of dust,  
O ye dry bones, let Him not call in vain.

## A PRAYER

Now let me die! This one full exquisite hour  
Hath drained the heart dry. From this moment's height

Life's path runs down thro' days of lessened  
light,

Life's night commences, fades Hope's perfect  
flower.

On Time's consummate Alp secure I stand,  
As one high-throned who feels the quickened  
flow

Of air where eagles wheel, and sees below  
Great cities lie like glittering heaps of sand.

How painful to descend by narrowing ways

To narrower life, to turn reluctant eyes  
Not all reluctant, from immense still skies,  
Grow base, decline, and rot thro' evil days!  
Ah God, of all my prayers but one I keep,  
"Let my best action ring the bell for sleep!"

## THE BUILDER

WITH weary hands we carve the stones  
And mortise them with blood and tears,  
We build our home of pride, we build  
Our house secure for many years.  
But that which lives within of care,  
Of want or woe, we do not guess;  
Alas, will no man tell us how  
To build the House of Happiness?

On miry roads, with bruised sad feet;  
Toward Golden Cities we aspire,  
Cities of Gold, whose burnished towers  
Beckon afar like tongues of fire.



Ah, vain the quest! Like flames that fade

Our golden cities flash and cease,

And who shall show us where is found

The City wherein dwelleth peace?

O foolish, foolish heart of man!

The little child with eager hand

Builds better palaces than thou

Of summer leaves or yellow sand.

For Laughter is his Architect,

And Joy his fair familiar,

And Visions are his visitors,

And God, and God's white evening star.

Oft have I prayed vain prayer and false;

Once more I pray—no more beguiled

By foolish pride or vain desire—

God, make me as a little child.

## HEAVEN

If one should find,  
After long wandering in ways unkind  
Thro' a great wood,  
Weighed down with darkness and with solitude,

A fresher wind,  
A sudden gleam of waters and green sward,  
A path should find,  
A golden gap slashed by the sun's strong sword,

And, opening up,  
All the bright country, like a brimming cup

A-foam with bloom,  
And sweet with Spring's dear promise and  
perfume:

Would he not say,  
"I have come unaware this happy day  
On Paradise:  
No longer will I wander on, unwise,  
But here will rest,  
Nor further go upon a bootless quest!"  
So I expect,  
Some day when all life's paths are most per-  
plex't,

To come at even  
Upon the pleasant quiet land of Heaven,  
And thank the road  
That with its many windings led to God.

## THE CHILD ASLEEP

BE careful how you wake the child, for you  
can never tell

Where the soul is traveling when the eyes  
are shut:

There are a hundred kingdoms quite invisible,  
Elfland and faeryland, Heaven and Lilliput,  
And where the soul is traveling you can never  
tell.

Be careful how you wake the child, for you  
will never know

What Powers are waiting for the soul upon  
Sleep's other side:

There are fairies and angels, like roses in a  
row,

And knights on shining horses all ready for  
a ride,

And which of them may call your child you  
will never know.

Be careful how you wake the child, for if your  
touch is rough

The shaken door of life may swing and drop  
its silent latch:

For children love their sleep so they never  
have enough,

And souls that wander in the dark are dif-  
ficult to catch,

And they may wander quite away if your  
touch is rough.

Be careful how you wake the child, for you  
can never know

How delicate the life-thread that holds the  
soul to earth:

In sleep-land there are angels, and all the flow-  
ers that blow,

And such immortal meadows, and such de-  
lightful mirth,

Your child may want to stay there—you can  
never know!

## NOBODY KNOWS

How the wind blows

Nobody knows.

Thro' the white Arctic spaces

And warm summer places,

It blows, and it blows ;

But where the wind goes

Nobody knows.

How a love goes

Nobody knows.

There's a word that one misses,

An end to fond kisses,

And lovers are foes :

But where the love goes

Nobody knows.

Where the dead go

No one may know.

There's a grave mid the grasses

Where nobody passes,

And twilights are slow ;

But where the dead go

No one may know.



## THE LAUGHING MAID

I WOULD not walk with sorrow

    If I were you;

'Tis hard enough to borrow

Day's courage to be true;

Why stint your gracious laughter

For fear of what comes after,

When suns have scorched youth's dew?

I would not walk with sorrow

    If I were you.

I would be blithe as birds are

    If I were you,

I would be glad as words are

When hopeful love is new.

You are the Dawn's own daughter,

Why seek you Grief's wan water  
That moans the long night through?  
I would be blithe as birds are,  
If I were you.

O not for tears and sadness  
God fashioned you!  
Your mouth He kissed for gladness,  
Such joy in you He knew.  
He gave your face the sweetness  
Of flowers in their completeness,  
Your lips the rose's hue.  
He never meant that sadness  
Should be for you.

The loads of life grow lighter  
Because of you;  
The rooms of life grow brighter

When you pass gaily through.  
For some Life brings harsh duty;  
Life asks of you but beauty  
In all the things you do;  
And Duty's yoke grows lighter  
Because of you.

I would not talk with sorrow  
If I were you.  
New fragrance I would borrow  
From mornings ever new.  
To men God gives lamenting;  
He gives, in sweet relenting,  
His mirth unto a few.  
His mirth, and not His sorrow,  
He gave to you.

## SHE PASSED AT DAWN

SHE passed at dawn; the summer breeze

Began the leaves to stir;

She passed like wind among the trees

And took the Dawn with her.

A gust of freshest fragrances

Did through the tree-tops beat;

It seemed the rustle of the dress

Round her departing feet.

A bird sang thrice, and yet again

In one long note sang he;

It was the very moment when

Her dear life ceased to be.

Such sweet composure marked her end,  
So calm her words did fall,  
It seemed she fancied Death a friend,  
And dying natural.

She passed so easily, we three  
Who knelt beside her bed  
For many minutes earnestly  
Prayed after she was dead.

She passed at Dawn, fit hour for one  
Whose years had all been bright!  
She passed; she took with her the Sun  
And left with us the Night.

## THE WISE MAN'S WISH

A LITTLE work with time to play,  
So let me live from day to day.  
Not too much burdened lest I give  
To work the strength I need to live,  
Nor too much at my ease, lest I  
Should lose my soul's integrity;  
With mind serene, with spirit gay,  
So let me live from day to day.

A little home, far from life's fray  
Where I may greet each punctual day;  
A room for books, a room for sleep,  
A fire of logs when snows are deep;

Each window bright with the surprise  
Of wide uninterrupted skies,  
That glow and fade from rose to gray;  
—There would I live from day to day.

A little wealth, but more I pray  
Of Love that shall enrich each day;  
Kind eyes that gleam to welcome me  
With faith and cheerful constancy;  
Then, when all earthly tasks are done,  
An old age sitting in the sun;  
A quiet grave when ends the way,  
Where I may wait God's better day.

## THE SONGS OF YOUTH

WHEN I have crossed the untumultuous sea,  
And feel beneath my tired feet the shore,  
The earliest greeting that will come to me,  
Will not be from the friends I knew before;  
No human hands with mine will mate,  
Another welcome I anticipate,  
When I have crossed the sea.

The songs I did not sing will meet me there,  
The little flame-flowered and gentle things  
That fled my heart perverse and left it bare;  
The low-pitched songs the quiet poet sings,  
Who asks not for applause, but sings apart,  
Content with praises from one trustful heart,  
These songs shall meet me there.



When I have crossed the untumultuous sea,  
Before I seek for any human smile,  
I shall desire, from pride freed utterly,  
To go apart, and weep a little while,  
While I recapture, tender strain by strain,  
The songs of my lost youth and all their pain,  
When I have crossed the sea.

## EARTH-LOVE

THE books I love stand row on row,  
They greet me, each with friendly face;  
If I must leave them, I would know  
What better friends shall take their place.

My pictures too; Madonna's eyes  
That long have watched my toiling pen,  
Great Turner's painted symphonies,  
A Cuyp, with cattle on the fen—

A Corot, veiled in silver mist,  
Pearl-dripping trees by waters wan;

And one of Venice, summer-kiss't,

By some unknown Italian.

What gain to me were streets of gold

That decorate an alien star?

Strange glories leave my spirit cold,

I cling to the familiar.

Though God should crush a thousand suns

To paint His crystal domes and seas,

More sweet old Corot's stream that runs

—Wan waters by pearl-dripping trees.

More sweet than that Jerusalem,

All new and fine, which John hath drawn,

Fair Venice, flashing like a gem

Upon the turquoise breast of dawn.

Let pallid saints flee from life's task,

And shut their hearts to earth-born mirth;

Death is no friend of mine. I ask

No better life than life on earth.







